



# Carving Newsletter

February/March 2022



Hello Carvers!

The [Gathering of the Guilds](#) is the largest art and craft show west of the Mississippi. With your help, we'll have a prominent and successful presence.

Over 200 artists featuring wood, pottery, glass, metal, fiber, and beads will display their work in the three day show at the Oregon Convention Center, Friday through Sunday, May 6 - 8.

Entry is free. Pre-pandemic attendance saw fifteen thousand visitors and shoppers. While expected to be less this year, attendance at the show should still be significant. Also, we think shoppers are eager to satisfy pent-up demand and spend their money on quality work.

Oregon Carvers Guild will be there for the first time. We will have a large booth (10' x 25') with demonstrations and carvings for sale. Our goals are to expand membership and provide members a way to sell their work.

Although this is our first carving presence, many in the club have significant experience with previous Gatherings. The woodworking section will have 25 booths, so we'll be in good company.

How can you help?

- » Attend to get inspired, meet new people, buy some gifts - reserve the dates
- » Loan us a carving to exhibit to show the breadth and depth of our art and craft
- » Sell a few or many of your carvings in our "Carving Store"
- » Help set up or tear down the booth; help with pre-planning and staging
- » Volunteer for a five-hour shift as a demonstrator or helper
- » Join the Comfort Birds Team before the show ([more information](#))

To explore possibilities for helping, [click here to join the Interest List](#), and we'll contact you.

Thanks for considering. It is a big event and with your help, we'll make it great.



*Larry*

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**Our Mission: Encourage carvers at all levels through education, fellowship, and mentoring**

## Special Event

### Special Event – A Free Virtual Visit with Michael Cullen

Date/Time: Sunday, March 13, 3:00 - 5:00 pm, online only



This free, short, online afternoon matinee will introduce you to Michael Cullen. He is a master of bandsaw boxes and free form sculpture in wood, and includes carving and painting in many of his designs. He will present his background, show examples of his work, and describe his approach. You will be introduced to a different way to think about woodworking.

[Register for the free event here.](#)

Also, Michael will be teaching an upcoming in-person class, [listed below.](#)



## Upcoming Programs

### Adam McIsaac (FREE) - Tribal Carvings of the Columbia River Basin

MAR 15, 7:00pm. [Click here to register](#)

*Note: This program has been changed to March 15 from March 8 as announced last month*

Adam McIsaac is a professional carver who has focused on Native American carvings in the Columbia River Basin for 30 years. He mainly does commissions and has many in Washington and Oregon.

Adam teaches carving in this style from time to time and also teaches how to make crooked knives and adzes. His studio is in La Center, WA just north of Vancouver.

Adam will cover a variety of topics related to carving style differences along the entire NW Coast. He will describe the unique style characteristics of the Chinook and other tribes along the Columbia River. He will also show examples of his work, discuss tools and techniques, and answer questions. The presentation will be a mix of photos, pre-recorded videos (for efficiency), and live interaction.



Adam's Wolf Mask



Adam McIsaac - Contemporary Owl Art

### Carving Tools with Edges (FREE) - Brands, preferences, sources

APR 12, 7:00pm. [Click here to register](#)

What are the best knives and gouges? Which are the best value? Where can I buy them locally or online? Does our club have tools to rent or borrow? Is there a global shortage? What about buying antique brands? Do you pronounce Pfeil as "file" or "feel"? Are Flexcut tools any good? Will George Blackman really forge me a custom tool? Can I pay someone to sharpen some tools? Can I really get a 10% discount at Woodcraft, Woodcrafters and Rockler?



## Upcoming Classes

### Michael Cullen - Free Form Vessel Class— in-person

Taught by Michael Cullen,

[Click here](#) to for class description and to register, Sat/Sun March 19/20, 9:00 -5:00pm



Michael Cullen is a renowned furniture maker and a regular contributor to Fine Woodworking Magazine, [click here](#) for his website.

This class is produced by the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers (GOOW) and is open to Oregon Carvers Guild members. Michael Cullen is a big deal. He is a professional guest instructor visiting from California. He will be teaching a creative five day bandsaw box class first; then he will teach the weekend class to create unique vessels. Class size is very limited and is open to beginners. Direct access to power tools is limited to those who passed certification tests at the GOOW, but indirect access will be available for others.



Sculpted Vessel with texture and color

### Walking Sticks & Wood Spirits — online only

Taught by Terry Burnside. [Click here](#) to register, three Saturdays Apr 2, 9 and 23, 10:00 - noon

This class is delivered in three sessions. The first two are a week apart, while the third is delayed because of religious holidays.

Most of two sessions will focus on carving a wood spirit. The first session will start with a talk on harvesting and preparing a walking stick and the last part of the final session will explore finishing topics. The same techniques of face carving can be applied to a variety of objects.



This class is designed for those not familiar with carving a wood spirit or face carving in general. Terry developed his techniques over 25 years, incorporating the techniques of several well known carving professionals.



## Stropping for Beginners

Taught by Roger Crooks.

Click a date to register [Apr 13](#), [May 11](#), [Interest List](#), [Wednesdays, 10:00am - 1:00pm](#)

One of our main charters is to preserve the art of carving and to do so requires teaching beginners. We all know sharpening is critical. There are many articles and videos online, and they often show contradictory ways to sharpen. For a beginner with few tools, figuring out how to start sharpening is daunting.

Our philosophy is to start with good tools and keep them sharp with stropping. Reshaping tools, power sharpening, and using stones will be taught in future classes.

This beginner's class delivers information with a handout, a video, an online demo and hands-on coaching. There is a fine line between getting a sharp edge and rolling over the edge making it duller. Correcting stropping technique in real time will start carvers on the right path to building muscle memory for sharpening. The class repeats monthly. Once the pandemic subsides, we'll do more of this class in-person,

A handout is available [here](#). Also -- be sure to check out the [video](#)!



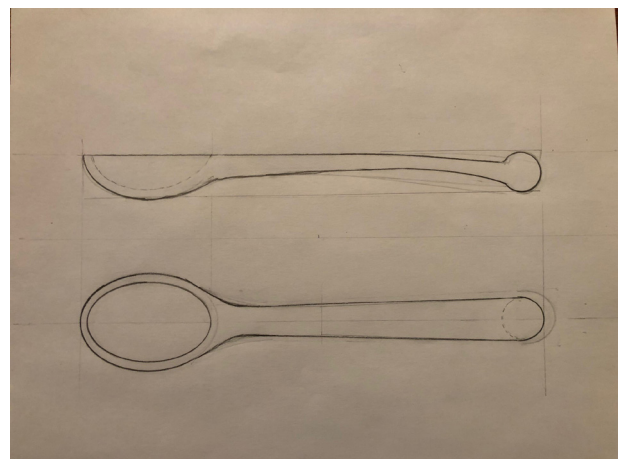
Leather Strops

## Beginner Spoon Carving (pilot class)— online only

Taught by Al Plasch.

Click [here](#) to register, two Thursdays Apr 14, 21, 10:00am - noon

This is a class for beginners to learn the basics of carving spoons. Everyone will carve a simple shape first, then have options for exploring variations. Basswood or Alaska Yellow Cedar will be used but users are welcome to provide their own. Loaner tools to be made available.



## Incised Carving Class (free) — online & hybrid

One Saturday 1:30-4:00pm, repeated monthly

Click to register [May 21](#)

This one-session, 2-1/2 hour class is for those new to carving or those who want to try incised carving. The same class repeats each month.

The incised style carves lines into the surface of wood and can be done safely with one tool. This workshop is for those who have never carved or for carvers who have no incised experience. Students will be provided with free basswood, a loaner tool, patterns, and a carving mat. This workshop will be taught online with Zoom for now. Once the virus rampage settles down, up to two in-person students (if fully vaccinated) might be possible.



Dogs Welcome Sign

Students will carve the Dogs Welcome sign shown, then a second project will at least be started. Students will use a parting (V) tool and will be shown how an Xacto knife or equivalent can also be used.

## Small Bowls in Four Woods — online only

Taught by Larry Wade.

Click [here](#) to register, four Wednesdays: May 10, 17, 24, and 31 2:00 - 4:00pm

This is a class for beginners to learn and practice carving small (4”), shallow bowls and experience a variety of soft and hard woods (Basswood, Alaska Yellow Cedar, Alder, Maple). Insides will be round or oval, shallow or deep. Out-sides can be round, square, rectangular, or shaped. Learning to hold the work safely provides many lessons.





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## Clubs and Guilds Nearby

### Coastal Carvers — Lincoln City

The club meets at the Lincoln City SDA School. Usually, monthly meetings are held the first Sunday of October through May, at 1:30pm. Club members also meet weekly on Tuesday evenings, from 6 to 8pm for unstructured carving. For details, [click here](#).

### Capitol Woodcarvers — Salem

For information, [click here](#). Their annual April carving show is well known, but it had to be cancelled for 2022. However, on their website, they announced that there will be a 2022 Virtual Show and Auction. More information and entry forms are to be posted soon on their website.

### Vancouver / King's Way Carvers — weekly on Thursdays

Thursday evenings 6:00 - 9:00 PM (summer 9:00 - noon). Contact Jim Mather at [jimmatherxx@gmail.com](mailto:jimmatherxx@gmail.com) or 360-931-0079. This group has been meeting since 2007 in a first class art room at a large private high school at 3606 NE 78th in Vancouver (Hazel Dell). The facility is locked so call ahead for the access code. They are a friendly and experienced group of carvers with a variety of interests.

### Milwaukie Woodcarvers — Milwaukie

This established group has recently restarted in-person carving sessions weekly on Wednesdays, 8:00 - 11:00am at the Milwaukie Center. Drop-ins welcome, for a small fee of \$1 or \$2 fee per session. Support for beginning carvers is provided. The address is 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (off Hwy 224 near Rusk Rd).

### Central Oregon Wood Carvers— Bend

A group of carvers in and around Bend, for information, contact Scott Beyer at [dxdrevolt@gmail.com](mailto:dxdrevolt@gmail.com).

### Olympia Woodworkers Guild— Olympia

They occasionally have interesting carving presenters for their monthly meetings. For information contact Bill Cogswell at [info@owwg.org](mailto:info@owwg.org) or see [owwg.org/blog](http://owwg.org/blog).

### Idaho Carvers Guild

This is a long-established group of carvers in and around Boise that have some meetings online and some in person. For information, contact Eric Owens at [idahowoodcarvers@gmail.com](mailto:idahowoodcarvers@gmail.com).

### California Carvers Guild (CCG)

This statewide umbrella organization supports over 40 clubs throughout the state and has a very long and deep history. Local clubs produce a variety of notable shows and events, while CCG produces a comprehensive newsletter called *The Log*, and trains judges for shows. Click here for their [website](#).



## Northwest Coastal Native American Carving - Part 2

### Introduction to Adam McIsaac and His Work Honoring Pacific Northwest Native Carving by Jim Spitzer

Our March 2022, [Oregon Carvers Guild Zoom meeting](#) (rescheduled from the usual 2nd Tuesday of the month to Tuesday, March 15th, 7 pm) features carver Adam McIsaac. Adam has over 30 years of experience as a professional carver in Northwest Coast Native American carving style. My previous article had an overview of the Native artistic style.

This month's article was to focus on Adam—what attracted him to specialize in this art, his tools, techniques, and examples of his extensive body of work. After the first article was published, Larry Wade and I agreed that it would be best that Adam personally describe the path to his area of carving expertise during our March program. Therefore, this is a short introduction to Adam and our March program.

To better introduce myself to Adam's work, early this month I visited a Cathlapotle Plankhouse near the Columbia River on the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. The Plankhouse was built as part of the 2005 Confluence Project, which celebrated the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

In the Plankhouse, Adam executed artistic forms and carvings designed by Tony Johnson, the current Chairman of the Chinook Indian Nation. This project was an important milestone to Adam's development and credibility as an artist specializing in Northwest Coast Native forms. This would be a great introduction to his art.

However, my efforts to see this important work were blocked. I could only see Adam's work on the large figure on the entrance end of the house, but the house was locked.

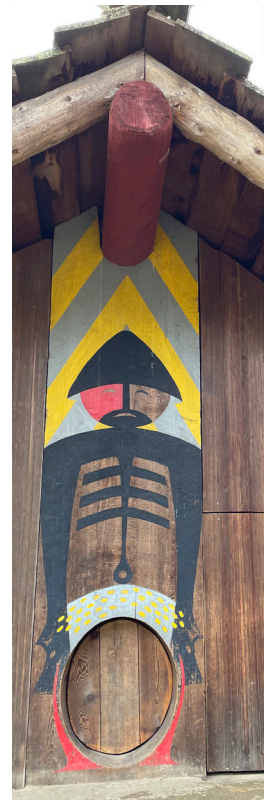


Cathlapotle Plankhouse



Adam McIsaac

I peered between the massive split cedar planks and saw only a cavernous dark space. Adam's main work was inside. I left without seeing more.



Plankhouse Detail



A little background to how we came to arrange Adam's presentation: in early December I had the pleasure of joining OCG President Larry Wade and Tom Rich to meet Adam at his shop in La Center, WA. His carving art takes many forms:

- » Furnishings and story boards such as those to be found in Cathlapotle Plankhouse
- » Monumental art such as large totem poles
- » Ceremonial masks, staffs, and head pieces; ducks, owls, cattails, frogs
- » Warriors in canoes and mythological figures

He also makes most of his own knives, adzes, and gouges in the traditional fashion of Native Americans after they transitioned to metal tools upon the arrival of explorers in the late 1700s.

The son of a biologist, Adam was raised just north of Vancouver, WA, in the rural village of Hockinson. It was in rural Washington that he learned to appreciate and respect nature early in his life. As a young man, he became enamored with Native American art, culture, and traditions. He learned the skills and cultural heritage of native communities at Native American Life Skills Rendezvous and through other studies.

Adam refined his skills working alongside master carvers such as:

- » Duane Pasco, a world-renowned artist, who had a major influence on the reemergence of Northwest Native style art since the 1960's
- » David Franklin, carver and artist in many other media and an apprentice to Pasco with Adam
- » James Benders', an earlier apprentice to Pasco

While Adam has carved in the style of many northwest tribes, he has specialized in those of lower Columbia River, such as the Chinook Nation (comprised of tribes along the last 200 miles of the Columbia River), and other tribes in northwest Oregon and southwest Washington. Adam has partnered with native master craftsmen on many projects over the years.

Tony Johnson, Chairman of the Chinook Indian Nation, noted about Adam that:

***"He is probably the most knowledgeable person that there is on Columbia River art, and he has gone further than that and brought art into the 21st century, keeping it traditional, in a good way."***

[https://www.oregonlive.com/clark-county/2012/03/adam\\_mcisaac\\_fell\\_in\\_love\\_with.html](https://www.oregonlive.com/clark-county/2012/03/adam_mcisaac_fell_in_love_with.html)

We look forward to Adam revealing those and other works to us. Please register for your Zoom meeting with Adam on March 15th: [Oregon Carvers Guild Zoom meeting](#)



**Making Native American Tools**



**Adam's 21st Century  
Native American Art Form**



**Art in Adam's Shop**

<sup>1</sup> Benders carved the two fifty-foot totem poles located at Pikes Place Market in Seattle

## Comfort Birds Project

### COMFORT BIRDS PROJECT by Larry Wade

We are making a lot of Comfort Birds for the Gathering of the Guilds, and you can pitch in.

Comfort Birds are small stylized birds intended to comfort those in need by touch. The idea was created by Frank Foust in 1982 and popularized in print by an [article in \*Woodcarving Illustrated\*](#).

Many clubs make, sell, or give birds to local individuals and organizations. For the Gathering of the Guilds, our goal is to sell Comfort Birds in our Carving Store as a fundraiser. Afterwards, we plan to continue the process and make enough to continually give away to the needy.

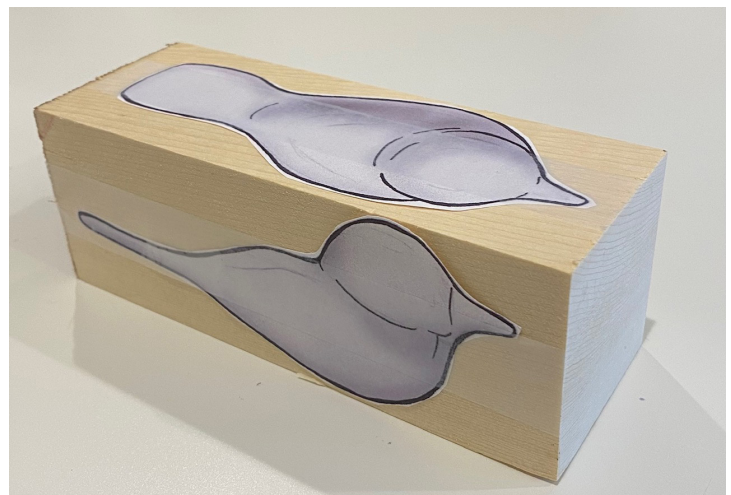
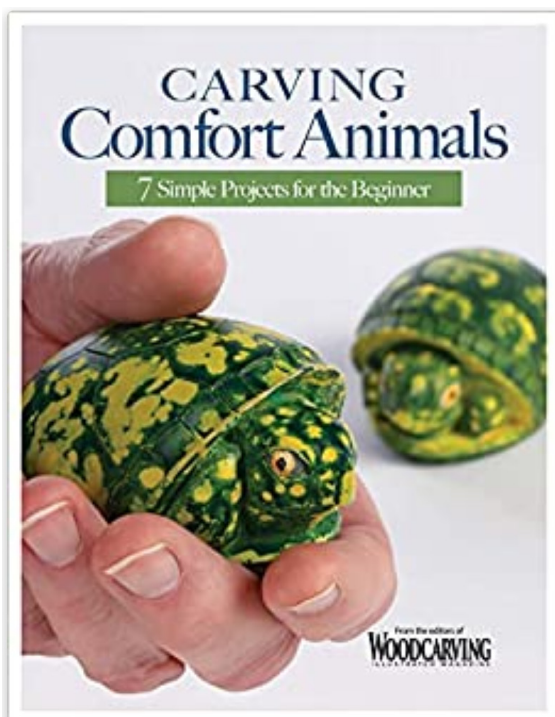
The idea has expanded beyond birds to other animals. Again, *Woodcarving Illustrated* popularized these in a small publication called [Carving Comfort Animals](#).

We would like to ask our members to help make them, and later to help find good homes and distribute them.

If you are willing to help make them, [click here to join the Interest List](#) and someone will contact you. They are very satisfying to make, take about an hour once you get going, and can be done efficiently when several are processed at once.

The woods we have so far are walnut, mahogany, limba, yellow cedar, an African hardwood called Ohia, holly, ebony, paduk, alder, and others. The varieties are endless, and it is a great way to use small blocks of mostly waste wood.

If you need wood and/or need to have the bandsaw work done, we can provide assistance.



## Upcoming Events

### Now

#### Fashion and Fantasy: The Art of Netsuke Carvings

Pavilion Gallery of the Portland Japanese Garden — February 11 to April 17, 2022



Once immensely popular across Japan, netsuke (pronounced nets-keh), which are small accessories fashioned from wood, ivory, or porcelain. They blurred the lines between function and art in their heyday. Fashion and Fantasy showcases the fascinating world of these miniature Japanese carvings traditionally used to secure small pouches to men's pocketless kimonos. Drawing on a recent gift from the Jim Coonan collection, this exhibition presents a glimpse into this little-known art form from pre-modern Japan. Each netsuke is highly detailed, imaginatively depicting people and animals from everyday life as well as folktales and fables. As you stroll across the manicured landscapes of Portland Japanese Garden, discover the whimsical world of these miniature fashion statements. [Website.](#)

### APRIL

#### 2022 Idaho Artistry in Wood Show

Jack's Urban Meeting Place, Boise, ID. April 2 - 3.



Five woodworking clubs (Treasure Valley Scrollers, Southwest Idaho Woodturners Association, Idaho Gourd Society, Idaho Woodcarvers Guild and Ada County Woodworkers) collaborate to make this one-of-a-kind show a major Northwest cultural attraction. The show will include woodcarving, woodturning, fine woodworking, pyrography, intarsia, gourds, marquetry, scrolling and other wood art. [Website.](#)

#### Capitol Woodcarvers — Salem, OR

Virtual Show -- May 1, 2022



Their annual April carving show is well known, but it had to be cancelled for 2022. However, on their website, they announced that there will be a 2022 Virtual Show and Auction. More information and entry forms are to be posted on their [website](#) soon.

#### Oakhurst Woodcarver's Rendezvous April 3 - 9, Community Center in Oakhurst, Ca.



This special week of carving is guaranteed to be fun for the whole family, and they are extending a special invitation to you to come and join in.

Currently, they have several different carving classes lined up. Classes range from Relief carving, power carving, bark carving, jewelry boxes, stepping stones, gourds and pine needle baskets, scroll saw, and others. One registration fee will allow you to attend as many classes as you like or you may choose to spend the whole week in just one class. All classes will be on a first come first served basis. [Website.](#)



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## MAY

### The Gathering of the Guilds

Oregon Convention Center, Portland, May 6-8, 2022



Oregon  
Convention  
Center

Six Portland-area guilds with over 200 artists will join forces to exhibit and sell art and functional products. All of which are unique and of exceptional quality. Details on the [Gathering of the Guilds website](#).

**NOTE:** The Oregon Carvers Guild has purchased a large booth area and encourages all OCG members to consider offering their creations for sale at the show. Also, if you can help at the Gathering, please let [Larry](#) know.

## JULY

### NW Carving Academy, Ellensburg, WA July 11-15, 2022

This is a long-established, week-long educational opportunity with multiple instructors from around the region and country. The classes that are offered include hand and power carving, pyrography, painting and design, and baskets. Additionally, special interest classes are offered for spouses and partners.

For registration information, [click here](#).

## SEPTEMBER

### Columbia Flyway & Wildlife Show - Sep 30, Oct 1 and 2, 2022, Astoria



This is a significant local show featuring nationally known bird and animal carvers, scheduled at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds in Astoria.

Contact [Randy Martin](#) to exhibit; save the dates and monitor the [website](#) for updates.

## JANUARY

### Coastal Carver Artistry in Wood Show – Lincoln City, January 2023



This annual January carving show is a fixture in the state and well worth attending. Although they had to cancel the 2022 show because their venue was not taking reservations for group events, they hope to have their normal show in 2023.

Check their [website](#) for current information.



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## Educational Opportunities

### Wildcraft Studio

A multi-arts non-profit that frequently has carving classes, click here for their website then scroll through their calendar. Rose Holdorf frequently teaches carving classes on the Scandinavian Dala Horse, spoons and kitchen utensils. Their classroom is now at 50th and SE Division, Portland OR. [Website](#).

### Port Townsend School of Woodworking

A very important regional resource that frequently has visiting carving professionals, including Mary May. For information, see the [Port Townsend School of Woodworking](#) website.

### Sitka Center for Art and Ecology

Among the many workshops the Sitka Center offers, there are 2 woodcarving classes and a pyrography class. You can check out the classes at the [Sitka Center website](#).

## Our Sponsors

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